PAROCHIAL HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR'S PERCEPTIONS OF WORK, MILITARY, AND EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

by

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ABSTRACT

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High school students are expected to select a career from a number of options available. Career choices are narrowed by the first step of that career. Students select the first step of their career based on limited facts and perceptions based on the life experiences and attitudes of the people around them. Students in a parochial high school are not studied as frequently and may have substantially different perceptions of career alternatives than public school students.

The purpose of this study is to access the perception of various post-secondary options held by senior students at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 2002.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the students in the senior class at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 2002 for their cooperation in this research. Special thanks to vice principal John Kolander, Pastor Leon Ehlert, Paster David Wenzel, Pastor Erich Schaser for their work in conducting the survey. Thanks also to Mrs. Jody Serwe and Mrs. Elaine Bartel in the school office. Thanks to my advisor Dr. Julianne Taylor at UW-Stout for reviewing and guiding the work.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

Everyone has probably been asked what kind of work he or she would like to do. This simple question generates responses in children who usually want to emulate their parents or some type of heroic figure, whether real or make believe. As children grow, they more easily separate real from fictional characters, but don't fully understand the effort required to follow the careers they see around them or in the media. Elementary school and life experiences begin to make some elements of specific jobs and careers clearer. Other unintended life circumstances impact attitudes towards education and careers. Hertz and Marshall (2001) edited a text by various authors containing chapters that discussed children's experiences in daycare, elementary school, and eavesdropping on parental discussions and actions. Considerable information, accurate or not, could be absorbed while children grow up by the attitude parents have towards work and the parents' actions in relation to work. According to Otto (2000), high school juniors consulted their mother most often, but half would like to discuss career issues more with mother, father, and their school counselor.

Personal preferences for the activities thought to be important in a job will also impact each child as they grow. Many studies are available that look at factors impacting career and educational choice (Boyer, 1968; Lins, 1969; Newcomb, 1992; Prokop, 1997; Segal & Bachman, 1978). Newcomb (1992) found that Native American high school students rated home school coordinators, principals, and recruiter visits as more important factors than did Caucasians. A questionnaire administered to high school seniors in Wisconsin collected data on post-high school plans for higher education including why some students' plans did not include higher education (Lins, 1969). Boyer (1968), in a study to assess the interest of Hawaiian high school seniors in community colleges, found that 71% intended to enter a

baccalaureate degree program, 17% into business and commerce programs and 12% into trade or technical programs. A study involving California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Illinois investigated student decision-making factors including test scores, parental expectations, intellectual predisposition, occupational preferences, values, and perception of school (University of California, Berkeley, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, Tillery, & College Entrance Examination Board, 1966). Researchers in Ohio investigated the immediate post secondary plans of high school students with a special emphasis on post secondary educational intentions. Findings included about half intending to go to a four-year college (Muskingum Area Technical College, 1994). Another study focused on military, job training, and education. Researchers found that high school seniors were likely to prefer job training or education to military service (Segal & Bachman, 1978). Hood (1968) conducted a survey comparing Minnesota college bound high school graduates and first year college grades, finding that socioeconomic background and personality type of the student were important factors.

People have always had advice and ideas on how to choose a career. In 1960, a four-step program was written to help students select the right college (Hodnett, p. 8-10). The four steps were: “clarify your goal,” “make a self analysis,” “a college research program,” and “ to review your action program and to make your final decision.” Many other people have written vastly different programs with the same guidance goal. Kucker (2000) described South Dakota’s national award winning counseling system, which provides programs that inform high school students and gives them practical experience to help them make suitable career plans. Wichita Public Schools (1990) offered a guide for use by high school seniors in Kansas consisting of worksheets and other materials designed to plan their future. Sections included employment, military, colleges, and vocational technical colleges. Indiana decided

that more of its high school students need a four-year college degree and designed a program that encouraged them to get one (Mooney, 1987).

Career decisions are instrumental in key areas of life including income, place of residence, required level of education, type of work, and many others. Faced with such an important choice, uncertainty arises in the human mind. Investigation has been done into the factors involved in career uncertainty in high school students (Schmidt, 2001). Spangler (2000, p. ii) stated, "the root cause of high school graduates' inability to make a career choice was studied" finding that "Students need to take responsibility for the decision-making process. Students need to have identified a career and have a tentative career plan before leaving high school". The uncertainty and dissatisfaction often arises in early part-time work and the first career choice. Sometimes impressionable high school students are influenced by parents and counselors to pursue unsuitable careers. Barre (1970, p. 2) warned parents and counselors that they "must not impose their values and desires upon the student. Rather their role is that of a catalyst as the student carries out his own investigation of offerings available to him." Non-traditional students often are people whose first careers are not satisfactory. There are often practical reasons, like money and family, to try to make a career improvement or change fairly quickly. Students selected for a focus group were asked the reasons why they enrolled at Chippewa Valley Technical College. According to Burntvedt (1994), the three most common reasons given were: time to complete the program, program quality, and improved job opportunities.

Research needs to be conducted on the attitude of the students, toward career alternatives and education before resources can be efficiently focused. An Australian study of tenth graders in public and private schools found that students from private schools had a more positive attitude towards education, in general and for themselves, than public school students, regardless of social origins or academic ability (Lamb, 1994). According to Karl

and Karl (2000), increased teacher-student contact improved the educational outlook of at-risk students in the Nicolet College Alternative High School. Often private schools allow more teacher-student contact time than public schools. It may be of interest to determine the student attitude towards educational and work alternatives at a private high school.

Statement of Problem

High school students will not investigate a specific post high school alternative unless they feel it is a viable option. Understanding the attitudes of Fox Valley Lutheran High School students towards these alternatives is an important step in understanding the choices made and formulating plans to improve the information about the options available.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine Fox Valley Lutheran High School senior students' perception of several post secondary alternatives. Data was collected through a survey conducted in the fall of 2002. The survey determined how viable these students think immediate work, military, junior college (2-year), technical college, religious college, or university (4-year colleges) fits into their personal plans for the next step in their life. The results could be valuable to the parents of the students and faculty at Fox Valley Lutheran High School to help evaluate the educational and guidance program. Fox Valley Technical College recruiters could use the information to evaluate elements of their recruiting program. Other educational institutions and the military may find the study useful as a reference for their recruitment programs. Finally, other researchers may find the study useful as a reference for future study.

Research Questions

The survey was designed to address the following questions:

1. Are there differences in participant attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about alternatives available after high school based on demographic characteristics?

2. If high school seniors had to choose today, what would they choose to do immediately after high school?
3. Are high school seniors aware that each of the alternatives (military, work, junior college, religious college, university, and technical college) provides many fulfilling career options?
4. Do high school seniors understand the career options offered by each of the alternatives, (military, junior college, religious college, university, work, technical college)?
5. Would high school seniors consider each of the alternatives, (military, junior college, religious college, university, work, technical college) immediately after high school?

Significance of Study

The survey provides information on the following significant points:

1. High school students will not investigate a specific post high school alternative unless they feel it is a viable option. Understanding the attitude of the students towards these alternatives is an important step in understanding the choices made and formulating plans to improve the information about the options available. Fox Valley Lutheran High School could take advantage of this knowledge to alter counseling and teaching to expand the coverage of specific career paths.
2. Fox Valley Technical College or other technical colleges could modify recruiting at Fox Valley Lutheran High School or high schools in general.
3. Parents of students may use the data to discuss post high school alternatives with their son or daughter.
4. Other educational institutions and the military may find the study useful as a reference for their recruitment programs.

Limitations

Several important items limit the study:

1. The study involves a sampling of high school seniors at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 2002.
2. This study is limited to participants attending Fox Valley Lutheran High School, a private school, almost all students are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the school is affiliated with that organization. Other religious groups are not represented in significant numbers.
3. The researcher designed the survey for use in this study. The reliability or validity of the survey has not been conclusively determined.
4. Student population is predominately white. Because of minimal diversity, no racial or ethnic differences will be studied.
5. Current guidance and educational programs and other factors that impact student attitude towards education were not studied.
6. The scope of the study is limited to the attitudes of students in one specific private school and is not designed for comparison to other private or public schools.

Assumptions

The study results are subject to the following factors:

1. Students will honestly report personal perceptions.
2. The survey responses will address the intent of the question.
3. Environmental conditions will not be a significant factor in the responses.
4. Students understand the difference between each of the alternatives by the definition and examples within the survey.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study and conclusions, the following terms are defined below:

1. Junior college is a school that provides education roughly equivalent to the first 2 years of a 4-year college and sometimes grants liberal arts associate degrees (McKechnie, 1983).
2. Military service is full time service in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard: not reserves or other part time service (McKechnie, 1983).
3. Religious College is a college that incorporates religious study, often training pastors for churches and teachers for parochial schools (McKechnie, 1983).
3. Technical College provides occupational training and/or issuing certificates for jobs such as Dental Hygienist, Automotive Technician, Electrician, or numerous other occupations (McKechnie, 1983).
4. University (college - 4 year) is an institution that grants baccalaureate degrees in a wide range of subjects (McKechnie, 1983).
5. Work is generally defined as any position or occupation for pay (McKechnie, 1983). In this study, only included are those positions that can be obtained with a high school education.

Methodology

The study consisted of a survey of the perceptions of a sample high school seniors enrolled at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 2002 toward selected post graduation alternatives. The choices included military service, work, junior college (2 year), technical college, religious affiliated college, or secular university (4 year college). Results indicated the students' perception towards the viability of each of the alternatives as the next step in their lives. Results show whether the students felt they understand the career options

offered by each alternative. The student selected the alternative they would choose if they had to choose the day of the survey.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

A considerable amount of work has been done discovering important factors involved in career selection. Most of the studies try to discover a correlation between a given set of factors and career choice. Each study looks at a limited number of factors to find the most important. People, especially parents, other relatives, counselors, friends, and teachers are ranked. Parents are frequently found to be the most influential, either directly or indirectly through example, demographics, or attitude. Many other factors are also important and often studied, including work experience, guidance, and attitude or perception. Studies have not, however, focused on perception alone. Do high school students see various possible career paths starting with all the post-high school alternatives or have they ruled out and failed to investigate some of the alternatives just because they do not see them as viable? The following sections will review some of the applicable information under topical headings.

Parental Influence

It is easy to believe that parents are an extremely important factor that influences how children perceive educational or career opportunities. For most children, parents are the adults with the most contact and are essential in the child's life. Hertz and Marshall (2001) edited a text by various authors containing chapters that discussed children's experiences in daycare, elementary school, and eavesdropping on parental discussions and actions. These experiences, designed for other needs, will cause changes in the way children look at careers. Parental actions and attitude towards work and career alternatives will provide unedited information to children in relation to work. According to Otto (2000), high school juniors consulted their mother most often, but half would like to discuss career issues more with

mother, father, and their school counselor. Miller (1989) found father and mother as the most influential in their child's career decision. Many of the studies group parents under factors such as relatives or study a part of parental influence such as occupation or parental expectations.

Factors Studied

Many studies have been done that look at factors impacting career and educational choice (Newcomb, 1992; Lins, 1969; Boyer, 1968; Segal & Bachman, 1978; Prokop, 1997). Each study included different factors that the researchers selected for their given work, seldom choosing the same factors as another. Some studies focus on other people as influences (Newcomb, 1992; Lins, 1969; Prokop, 1997). Newcomb (1992) found that Native American high school students rated home school coordinators, principals, and recruiter visits as more important factors than did Caucasians. In a study of Hmong American teenagers at Menomonie High School in Wisconsin (Prokop, 1997), influencing factors were ranked in the following order; individual family, societal, socio-economic, psycho-social-emotional, and situational. Taking the opposite approach, a questionnaire administered to high school seniors in Wisconsin collected data on post-high school plans for higher education and if plans did not include higher education, why (Lins, 1969). Results included the effects of high school, friends, relatives, college location, image, financial aid, housing, parents' education, and occupation on their career choice. About the same time, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Illinois were studied for grade twelve student decision-making factors including test scores, parental expectations, intellectual predisposition, occupational preferences, values, and perception of school (University of California, Berkeley, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, Tillery, & College Entrance Examination Board, 1966). Hood (1968) conducted a survey comparing Minnesota college bound high school graduates and first year college grades, finding that socioeconomic background and

personality type of the student were important factors in matching the right student to the right college. Researchers in Ohio investigated the immediate post secondary plans of high school students with a special emphasis on post-secondary educational intentions. Findings included about half intending to go to a four-year college (Muskingum Area Technical College, 1994). Important student interests studied included majors and types of jobs. Mattner (1992, p. ii) found that although 99% of students reported work experience, students perceived little connection between "knowledge taught in school and application of knowledge on the job. Most students perceived work activities having little or no impact on career or educational activities." Another study addressed gender with focus on military, job training, and education. They found that high school seniors were likely to prefer job training or education to military service (Segal & Bachman, 1978). Boyer (1968) included academic and socio-economic background in a study to assess the interest of Hawaiian public and private high school seniors in community colleges. She found that 71% intended to enter a baccalaureate degree program, 17% into business and commerce programs and 12% into trade or technical programs. Miller (1989, p. ii) attempted to collect many important factors that had a significant effect on Rice Lake (Wisconsin) High School seniors post graduation plans. Important factors after parents mentioned above were, " other person, friend, interest in this work, and money/salary."

Advice and Programs

People have always been offered advice and ideas on how to choose a career. In 1960, a four-step program was written to help students select the right college (Hodnett, p. 8-10). The four steps were: "clarify your goal", "make a self analysis", "a college research program", and " to review your action program and to make your final decision." Many other people have written vastly different programs with the same guidance goal. Kucker (2000) described South Dakota's national award winning counseling system, which provides

programs that inform high school students and gives them practical experience to help them make suitable career plans. Wichita Public Schools (1990) offered a guide for use by high school seniors in Kansas consisting of worksheets and other materials designed to plan their future. Sections included employment, military, colleges, and vocational technical colleges. Indiana decided that more of its high school students needed a four-year college degree and designed a program to encourage them to get one (Mooney, 1987). One book reviews exemplary programs that fall into four categories: schools, post-secondary institutions, work, and families and communities (Snyder & Spindel, 1997). The goal of this book is to connect a student's dreams with a path to that future.

Uncertainty and Second Chances

Career decisions are instrumental in key areas of life including income, place of residence, required level of education, type of work, and many others. Faced with such an important choice, uncertainty arises in the human mind. Investigation has been done into the factors involved in career uncertainty in high school students (Schmidt, 2001). In a thesis, 'the root cause of high school graduates inability to make a career choice was studied'; finding that "Students need to take responsibility for the decision-making process. Students need to have identified a career and have a tentative career plan before leaving high school" (Spangler, 2000, p. ii). According to Fawcett and Maycock (2001), levels of career indecision in an ethnically diverse urban high school were reduced in students who were active in school-to-work programs. Dissatisfaction can arise in early part-time work and the first career choice. Sometimes impressionable high school students are influenced by parents and counselors to pursue unsuitable careers. Barre (1970, p.2) warned parents and counselors that they "must not impose their values and desires upon the student. Rather their role is that of a catalyst as the student carries out his own investigation of offerings available to him." Non-traditional students often are people whose first careers are not satisfactory. Reusch (2000)

reported that employment was the most likely reason post-baccalaureate transfer students enrolled in a community college degree or certificate program. There are often practical reasons, like money and family, to try to make a career improvement or change fairly quickly. Students selected for a focus group were asked the reasons why they enrolled at Chippewa Valley Technical College. According to Burntvedt (1994), the three most common reasons given were: time to complete the program, program quality, and improved job opportunities.

Perception

Research needs to be conducted on the perception of the students toward career alternatives and education. According to Ocker (2000), many high school students fail to investigate technical careers and pursue immediate employment or enroll in a four-year college. Because counselors are considered important in the student's life, the study assessed the perception of counselors and counselors-in-training towards the Wisconsin Technical College System as a viable post-secondary option. The conclusion was that the Wisconsin Technical College System had educated counselors about the opportunities they offer. An Australian study of tenth graders in public and private schools found that students from private schools had a more positive attitude towards education, in general and for themselves, than public school students regardless of social origins or academic ability (Lamb, 1994). According to Karl and Karl (2000), increased teacher-student contact improved the educational outlook of at-risk students in the Nicolet College Alternative High School. Often private schools allow more teacher-student contact time than public schools. Therefore, it may be of interest to determine the student attitudes towards educational and work alternatives at a private high school. Do these private high school students see each post-high school alternative as a viable choice? Or has perception of the value of some of the alternatives ruled them out before student investigation?

Summary

The studies cited above have included many aspects of career selection. Most have selected a list of relevant, yet incomplete factors that affect this crucial decision. Entire industries have been developed to attack this problem, but it still comes down to each young adult taking the first step towards his/her life and career. This study examined the perceptions of the post-secondary alternatives and investigated how many viable options high school graduates really see.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This study surveyed perceptions of high school seniors enrolled at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 2002 to selected post graduation alternatives. The choices included military service, work, junior college (2 year), technical college, religious affiliated college, or secular university (4 year college). Results indicated the students' perception towards the viability of each of the alternatives as the next step in their life. This chapter includes a discussion of subject selection, description, survey instrument description, data collection, analysis and limitations.

Subject Selection and Description

Participants in this study were seniors enrolled in Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton Wisconsin in the fall of 2002. The high school is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Students were almost all members of one of the 39 affiliated member congregations. However, students may come from a non-member church or another denomination if accepted on a case-by-case basis by school administration. Enrollment is 617 for the 2002-2003 school year in grades 9-12 including 145 in the senior class. Student participation was voluntary. Telephone numbers and names of people to contact with questions were provided in a note on the consent form. Student and parental/guardian approval was obtained for the research (see Appendix A). Approval of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Stout was received prior to the start of the research.

Instrumentation

The survey (see Appendix B) consisted of a two-page document focusing on the perception and attitude of high school seniors toward selected post high school alternatives. The researcher for this specific study developed the survey instrument. A four-point Likert scale was used. The students were asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. For data handling and calculation these responses were assigned 1,2,3, and 4 respectively. The average, standard deviation and percentage of these numbers for each statement were calculated for each gender, grade level, and total.

Reliability and validity of the survey instrument has not been conclusively determined. A survey format was selected because of the scope of the project and researcher familiarity with the format. According to Leedy (1985) a questionnaire survey is commonly used to discover data beyond the physical observation of the researcher. The survey instrument is in Appendix B. The following questions were included in the survey with the research question referenced for each survey question:

1. What is the gender of the student? (Research question 1)
2. What high school grades does the student report? (Research question 1)
3. If the student had to choose today, what would they choose to do immediately after high school? (Research question 2)
4. Does the student strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that each of the alternatives, (military, work, junior college, religious college, university, and technical college) provides many fulfilling career options? (Research question 3)
5. Does the student strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that they understand the career options offered by each of the alternatives, (military, junior college, religious college, university, work, technical college)? (Research question 4)

6. Does the student strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that they would consider each of the alternatives, (military, junior college, religious college, university, work, technical college) immediately after high school? (Research question 5)

Data Collection

The three instructors for required senior religious classes distributed the survey instrument on or about November 1, 2002 along with the consent forms. A total of 145 surveys were distributed. The senior class of 2003 consists of 145, 68 males and 77 females, with 61 and 54 respectively surveys used. Accumulation of all consent forms, class schedule, and school holidays were factors that delayed the completion of the research until December 17, 2002. This period of time is not considered to have impacted the results. No other significant environmental factor was observed that would be expected to change the survey results.

The consent forms were handed out in class with the reward of a drawing for a twenty-five dollar gift certificate for any consent form returned. Use of a token incentive that would motivate the researcher as suggested by Leedy (1985), did not motivate all selected participants to return the forms.

Analysis

Answers given in the survey were assigned numerical values to allow calculation of averages and standard deviations. Strongly agree answers were assigned 1, agree assigned 2, disagree assigned 3, and strongly disagree assigned 4. The numbers are significant only for convenient calculations and many other number assignments could also have been used.

The data tables contain a column designated Total Percent which represents the combined answers of all students. Comparing each of the other columns to the Total Percent shows if the sub-group has different answers than the total.

Limitations

Important items that limit the study:

1. The researcher was not present at the classes describing the survey and consent forms. The students were introduced to the research by one of three instructors. Therefore, slight variations in instructions and presentation were possible. Survey simplicity and written instructions should have minimized this effect, if any.
2. Student attitude towards religion class or the instructor could have had an unknown impact on survey results. Religion class is mandatory for all students.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

A total of 115 out of 145 or 79 % of surveys were accepted based on return of consent forms, legibility, and all questions completed. This return rate was reasonable considering the survey was voluntary. Reasons for loss of the participants included a survey with the answer "to win the lottery" for career choice was rejected as unresponsive. Student self-reported grades include only A (37), B (56), and C (22) because no students recorded D or F. Several surveys were rejected because participants selected more than one choice for grades. The response was 61 or nearly 90% for males versus 54 or 70% for females. The researcher is not aware of any particular reason for the significantly higher male response.

Career Choices

The career choices selected by students are summarized in Table 1 by gender and Table 2 by self-reported grades. The percentages in the total column of Table 1 compare favorably with a brochure called 2002 - 2003 profile that lists historical graduate prospects of 4-year college 70%, 2–year college 20%, armed forces 3%, and employment 7% (Fox Valley Lutheran High School). Similar percentages of male and female students chose some type of advanced education, however, a higher number and percentage of females than males chose University, 31 or 57% as compared to 27 or 44%. A higher number and percentage of males 12 or 20%, 4 or 7%, 14 or 23% selected Religious College, Junior College, and Technical College respectively. Conversely fewer females 8 or 15%, 2 or 4%, 10 or 18% selected Religious College, Junior College, and Technical College respectively. Few males 2 or 3%, 2 or 3% or females 2 or 4%, 1 or 2% selected Work or Military, respectively, as the initial career step.

Table 1

Career Choices by Gender

Career Choice	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
University	44	57	50
Religious College	20	15	17
Junior College	7	4	5
Technical College	23	18	21
Work	3	4	4
Military	3	2	3

In Table 2, University was the most popular career choice for all reported grade levels. A higher percentage of A students (24 or 65%), than B (27 or 48%), and C (7 or 32%) selected University. Religious College was second most often selected by A (9 or 24%) students, while B (16 or 29%) and C (6 or 27%) students second most often choice was Technical College. Religious College was third most often selected by B (8 or 14%) students and tied for third with Work for C (3 or 4%) students. At all grade levels greater than 80% of participants selected some form of additional education immediately after high school.

Table 2

Career Choices by Self-Reported Grades

Career Choice	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
University	65	48	32
Religious College	24	14	14
Junior College	0	7	9
Technical College	5	29	27
Work	3	0	14
Military	3	2	4
Total	100	100	100

Options Offering Fulfilling Careers

In Table 3, the majority of both genders agreed (male 33 or 54%, female 36 or 67%) and some strongly agreed (male 10 or 16%, female 5 or 9%) that the Military offered many fulfilling career options. A significant number disagreed (male 14 or 23%, female 11 or 20%). The average was the same (2.2) and standard deviation (males 0.8, females 0.6, total 0.7) was similar.

Table 3

Military Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	16	9	13
Agree	54	67	60
Disagree	23	20	22
Strongly Disagree	7	4	5

Table 4 indicates that students reporting C (5 or 23% strongly agree, 13 or 59 % agree, 2 or 9% disagree, 2 or 9% strongly disagree, 2.0 average) grades had a higher opinion of Military career options than students reporting A (4 or 11% strongly agree, 25 or 67% agree, 8 or 22% disagree, 0 or 0% strongly disagree, 2.1 average) grades. Students reporting B (6 or 11% strongly agree, 31 or 55% agree, 15 or 27% disagree, 4 or 7% strongly disagree, 2.3 average) grades had the lowest opinion. The standard deviation was 0.6 for A and 0.8 for B and C students.

Table 4

Military Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	11	11	23
Agree	67	55	59
Disagree	22	27	9
Strongly Disagree	0	7	9

In Table 5, members of both genders responded in similar percentages (strongly agree – male 0 or 0%, female 1 or 2%; agree – male 12 or 20%, female 12 or 22%; disagree – male 35 or 57%, female 28 or 52%; strongly disagree – male 14 or 23%, female 13 or 24%). The average of male, female and total of all responses (3.0) disagreed that immediate Work offers many fulfilling career options. The standard deviation for both genders and total was 0.7.

Table 5

Work Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	0	2	1
Agree	20	22	21
Disagree	57	52	55
Strongly Disagree	23	24	23

Table 6 indicates that students reporting A (strongly agree 0 or 0%, agree 6 or 16%, disagree 19 or 51%, strongly disagree 12 or 32%) grades slightly more strongly disagreed that Work offers many fulfilling career options than students reporting C (strongly agree 1 or 4%, agree 3 or 14%, disagree 13 or 59%, strongly disagree 5 or 23%) or B (strongly agree 0 or 0%, agree 15 or 27%, disagree 31 or 55%, strongly disagree 10 or 18%) grades. The A, B, and C averages (3.2, 2.9, 3.0) and standard deviations (0.7, 0.7, 0.8) were similar.

Table 6

Work Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	0	0	4
Agree	16	27	14
Disagree	51	55	59
Strongly Disagree	32	18	23

Table 7 indicates that female (strongly agree 13 or 24%, agree 38 or 70%, disagree 3 or 6%, strongly disagree 0 or 0%) students had a slightly stronger agreement than males (strongly agree 6 or 10%, agree 50 or 82%, disagree 5 or 8%, strongly disagree 0 or 0%) with the statement that Junior Colleges offer many fulfilling career options. The average and standard deviation for females (1.8, 0.5) males (2.0, 0.4) and total (1.9, 0.5) were similar.

Table 7

Junior College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	10	24	16
Agree	82	70	77
Disagree	8	6	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

From data in Table 8, A (strongly agree 5 or 14%, agree 30 or 81%, disagree 2 or 5%, strongly disagree 0 or 0%) and B (strongly agree 12 or 21%, agree 40 or 71%, disagree 2 or

7%, strongly disagree 0 or 0%) students have a slightly higher opinion of Junior College than C (strongly agree 2 or 9%, agree 18 or 82%, disagree 2 or 9%, strongly disagree 0 or 0%) students. On average A (1.9), B (1.9), and C (2.0) students reported agreeing that Junior College offers many fulfilling career options even though few students (5% of total, Table 1) selected Junior College. Standard deviations for A, B, and C students were similar (0.4, 0.5, 0.4).

Table 8

Junior College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	14	21	9
Agree	81	71	82
Disagree	5	7	9
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

Both male (40 or 66%) and female (34 or 63%) students, (Table 9), agree and disagree (male 7 or 11% and female 4 or 7%) in similar percentage that Religious College offers many fulfilling career options. Females (15 or 28%) had a significantly higher strongly agree response than males (11 or 18%). Males (3 or 5%) more frequently reported strongly disagree than females (1 or 2%). Because of the difference in these strong opinions, on average females had a slightly stronger than agree (1.8) response while on average males (2.0) had an agree response. Standard deviations for total (0.7), male (0.7), and female (0.6) were similar.

Table 9

Religious College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	18	28	23
Agree	66	63	64
Disagree	11	7	10
Strongly Disagree	5	2	3

Table 10 indicates that A (10 or 27%) students reported the highest strongly agree response, followed by B (12 or 21%), and C (4 or 18%). Agree response was higher for B (38 or 68%) and C (15 or 68%) students than A (21 or 57%) students. Disagree response for A (4 or 11%) was slightly higher than B (5 or 9%) and C (2 or 9%). Strongly disagree response for A (2 or 5%) and C (1 or 5%) was higher than B (1 or 2%). Students reporting A (1.9), B (1.9), and C (2.0) grades on average agree to about the same degree that Religious College offers many fulfilling career options. Standard deviation was similar for A (0.8), B (0.6), and C (0.7) students.

Table 10

Religious College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	27	21	18
Agree	57	68	68
Disagree	11	9	9
Strongly Disagree	5	2	5

In Table 11 a higher percentage of males (45 or 74%) than females (29 or 54%) strongly agree while a lower percentage of males (14 or 23%) than females (25 or 46%) agree that Universities offer many fulfilling career options. The average doesn't indicate this fact clearly showing only a slightly higher strongly agree for males (1.3) than females (1.5). Standard deviation was 0.5 for both genders and the total.

Table 11

University Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	74	54	64
Agree	23	46	34
Disagree	3	0	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

In Table 12, students reporting higher grades reported a higher percentage strongly agreeing that University offers many fulfilling career options (A - 27 or 73%, B - 35 or 63%, C - 12 or 55%). The remaining A (10 or 27%) and B (21 or 37%) students selected agree. For students reporting C, 8 or 36% selected agree and the remaining students, 2 or 9% selected disagree. The average and standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 1.3 and 0.5, 1.4 and 0.5, 1.5 and 0.7 respectively. No students selected strongly disagree.

Table 12

University Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	73	63	55
Agree	27	37	36
Disagree	0	0	9
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

Table 13 indicates that both males (strongly agree 13 or 21%, agree 43 or 71%, disagree 5 or 8%) and females (strongly agree 10 or 19%, agree 40 or 74%, disagree 4 or 7%) agree to the same level that Technical College offers many fulfilling career options. No one reported strongly disagree. The average and standard deviation were the same for both genders and the total were 1.9 and 0.5 respectively.

Table 13

Technical College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	21	19	20
Agree	71	74	72
Disagree	8	7	8
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

In Table 14 a higher percentage of students reporting lower grades (C – 18 or 82%, B – 41 or 73%, A – 24 or 65%) grades selected agree for the response to Technical Colleges offer many fulfilling career options. Strongly agree was the second most frequent response for all grades (A – 8 or 22%, B – 12 or 21%, C – 3 or 14%). Disagree was selected more frequently by A (5 or 13%), than B (3 or 5%) or C (1 or 4%) students. The average and standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 1.9 and 0.6, 1.8 and 0.5, 1.9 and 0.4 respectively.

Table 14

Technical College Offers Many Fulfilling Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	22	21	14
Agree	65	73	82
Disagree	13	5	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

Understanding Career Options

Table 15 shows a higher percentage of males (40 or 66%) than females (27 or 50%) agreed and a higher percentage of females (6 or 11%, 20 or 37%) strongly agreed or disagreed than males (3 or 5%, 16 or 26%) that they understood Military career options. Females (standard deviation 0.7) had a slightly greater diversity of response than either males or total (standard deviation 0.6), however on average both genders and total had slightly lower than agree response (2.3).

Table 15

Understand Military Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	5	11	8
Agree	66	50	58
Disagree	26	37	31
Strongly Disagree	3	2	3

In Table 16 below students reporting lower grades had a higher percentage of agree as the response to understanding Military career options (C –14 or 64%, B – 33 or 59%, A – 20 or 54%). Students reporting A (16 or 43%) grades had a higher percentage of disagree responses than students reporting B (16 or 28%) or C (4 or 18%) grades. The average response was just slightly above neutral for B (2.2), C (2.3) and A (2.4) students. Standard deviation indicated slightly less diversity of opinion for A (0.6) than B (0.7) or C (0.8) students.

Table 16

Understand Military Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	3	11	9
Agree	54	59	64
Disagree	43	28	18
Strongly Disagree	0	2	9

In Table 17 below the majority of students of both genders (male – 44 or 72%, female – 36 or 67%) reported agreeing that they understood the career options offered by Work. A higher percentage of males (11 or 18%) and females (11 or 20%) disagreed than strongly agreed (males 6 or 10%, females 6 or 11%) that they understood the career options offered by Work. The average and standard deviation for males, females, and total were 2.1 and 0.5, 2.2 and 0.6, 2.1 and 0.6 respectively.

Table 17

Understand Work Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	10	11	10
Agree	72	67	70
Disagree	18	20	19
Strongly Disagree	0	2	1

In Table 18, 17 or 77% of students reporting C grades agree that they understand the career options offered by immediate Work. For students reporting A grades, 27 or 73% selected agree, however, B students selected agree 36 or 64% of the time. Students reporting B (8 or 14%) grades also had a higher percent of strongly agree responses than A (3 or 8%) and C (1 or 5%) students. Disagree responses were higher for B (12 or 21%) students than A (7 or 19%) and C (3 or 14%) students. No A or B students and only 1 C student (5%) reported that they strongly disagreed that they understood career options offered by immediate Work. Average and standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 2.1 and 0.5, 2.1 and 0.6, and 2.2 and 0.6 respectively.

Table 18

Understand Work Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	8	14	5
Agree	73	64	77
Disagree	19	21	14
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5

In Table 19 below a higher percentage of females (43 or 80%) than males (43 or 70%) reported agreeing that they understood the career options offered by Junior College. Similar percent of males (5 or 8%) and females (5 or 9%) reported strongly agree while more than twice the percent of males (13 or 21%) than females (5 or 9%) disagreed that they understood Junior College career options. The average and standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 2.1 and 0.5, 2.0 and 0.5 and 2.1 and 0.5 respectively.

Table 19

Understand Junior College Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	8	9	9
Agree	70	80	75
Disagree	21	9	16
Strongly Disagree	0	2	1

In Table 20 below the responses were similar for all self-reported grade levels with a large majority agreeing that they understood Junior College career options (A – 29 or 78%, B – 40 or 71%, C – 17 or 77%). Average response for B (2.0) students was agree, with A (2.1) and C (2.2) just slightly below agree, due to the higher strongly agree response for B (7 or 13%) than A (2 or 5%) or C (1 or 5%) students. Disagree responses were similar for A (6 or 16%), B (9 or 16%), and C (3 or 14%) students in understanding career options offered by Junior college. Standard deviation for A, B, and C were 0.5, 0.5, and 0.6 respectively.

Table 20

Understand Junior College Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	5	13	5
Agree	78	71	77
Disagree	16	16	14
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5

In Table 21, there appears to be similar responses for both males (43 or 70%) and females (40 or 74%) agreeing that they understand the career options offered by Religious College. All other responses for males (strongly agree – 12 or 20%, disagree – 5 or 8%, strongly disagree – 1 or 2%) and females (strongly agree – 9 or 17%, disagree – 3 or 6%, strongly disagree – 2 or 4%) were also similar. Standard deviation was the same for both genders and the total (0.6). The average for male, female, and total were 1.9, 2.0, and 1.9 respectively.

Table 21

Understand Religious College Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	20	17	18
Agree	70	74	72
Disagree	8	6	7
Strongly Disagree	2	4	3

On average, students reporting C grades had a lower level of agreement (2.2 - slightly below agree) that they understood the career options offered by Religious Colleges than B (1.9 – slightly above agree) or A (1.8 - slightly above agree) students. The difference is due in large part to the higher percent of strongly agree responses from A (9 or 24%) and B (11 or 20%) students than C (1 or 5%) students that they understood career options offered by Religious College (Table 22). Standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 0.6, 0.6, and 0.7 respectively.

Table 22

Understand Religious College Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	24	20	5
Agree	68	73	77
Disagree	8	5	9
Strongly Disagree	0	2	9

In Table 23, about 2/3 of both males (40 or 66%) and females (35 or 65%) selected agree and nearly 1/3 selected strongly agree (male – 18 or 29%, female – 17 or 31%) that they understood the career options offered by a University. No one selected strongly disagree. The average for male, female, and total were 1.8, 1.7, and 1.7 respectively. Standard deviation was 0.5 for both genders and the total.

Table 23

Understand University Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	29	31	30
Agree	66	65	65
Disagree	5	4	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

Students reporting C (2.0) grades average response was agree compared to B (1.7 slightly above agree) or A (1.6 slightly higher above agree). C students also reported a lower percentage of strongly agree (C – 4 or 18%, B – 18 or 32%, A – 13 or 35%) responses to understanding University career options (Table 24). A very high similar agree response was selected by students (A – 24 or 65%, B – 36 or 64%, C – 15 or 68%). No A and few B (2 or 4%) selected disagree; however 3 or 14% of C students disagreed that they understood career options offered by University as an initial career step. Standard deviation for both genders was 0.5 and 0.6 for the total.

Table 24

Understand University Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

Career Choice	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	35	32	18
Agree	65	64	68
Disagree	0	4	14
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

Male and female responses were similar both averaging agree (2.0) for understanding Technical College career options. A large majority of male (50 or 82%) and female (40 or 74%) selected agree (Table 25). The second highest response for males (6 or 10%) and females (8 or 15%) was strongly agree. Standard deviation for male, female, and the total were 0.5, 0.6 and 0.5 respectively.

Table 25

Understand Technical College Career Options by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	10	15	12
Agree	82	74	78
Disagree	6	7	7
Strongly Disagree	2	4	3

In Table 26, 46 B and 18 C (both 82%) and 26 or 70% of A students selected agree understanding Technical College career options. Among students reporting A (5) and B (8)

grades 14% selected strongly agree, however 2 or 10% of students reporting C selected strongly disagree (A – 0 or 0%, B – 1 or 2%) accounting for the difference in the average indicating that B (1.9) and A (2.0) reported more agreement than C (2.2) students. Standard deviations for A, B, and C were 0.6, 0.5, and 0.7 respectively.

Table 26

Understand Technical College Career Options by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	14	14	4
Agree	70	82	82
Disagree	16	2	4
Strongly Disagree	0	2	10

Considering Career Options

Table 27 summarizes student responses by gender. Few students considered the military with females (28 or 52%) having more strongly disagree responses than males (20 or 33%). A high percent of males (27 or 44%) and females (18 or 33%) also selected disagree. Agree was selected by males (12 or 20%) more than females (7 or 13%). Few males (2 or 3%) or females (1 or 2%) reported that they strongly agreed that they considered Military as a career option. The averages for male, female, and the total were 3.1, 3.4, and 3.2 respectively. Standard deviation for both genders and the total was 0.8.

Table 27

Consider Military by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	3	2	3
Agree	20	13	17
Disagree	44	33	39
Strongly Disagree	33	52	42

On average more of the students reporting higher grades (A - 3.4, B - 3.2, C - 2.9) disagreed slightly more strongly that they considered the Military. Students reporting higher grades more frequently selected strongly disagree (A – 18 or 49%, B – 24 or 43%, C – 6 or 27%) and disagree (A – 15 or 41%, B – 22 or 39%, C – 8 or 36%) than students reporting lower grades (Table 28). Agree was selected by 3 or 8% of A, 9 or 16% of B, and 7 or 32% of C students and few selected strongly agree (A – 1 or 3%, B – 1 or 2%, C – 1 or 5%). Standard deviation was 0.8 for A and B students and 0.9 for C students.

Table 28

Consider Military by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	3	2	5
Agree	8	16	32
Disagree	41	39	36
Strongly Disagree	49	43	27

On average few males (3.0 – disagree) and even fewer females (3.3 – slightly stronger disagree) considered immediate Work as a first step in a fulfilling career. About 80% of males (17 or 28%, 32 or 52%) and females (26 or 48%, 18 or 33%) selected strongly disagree or disagree (Table 29). Standard deviations were 0.8 for both males and total and 0.9 for females.

Table 29

Consider Work by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	7	4	5
Agree	13	15	14
Disagree	52	33	43
Strongly Disagree	28	48	37

In Table 30 the data indicates that C (Strongly agree – 2 or 9%, Agree – 4 or 18%) students gave more consideration to immediate Work than B (Strongly agree – 4 or 7%, Agree – 10 or 18%) and much more consideration than A (Strongly agree – 0 or 0%, Agree – 2 or 5%) students as a first career step. The averages for A, B, and C were 3.5, 3.0, and 2.8 respectively indicate that few students regardless of grades gave serious consideration to work as an initial career step. Standard deviation for A, B, and C students were 0.6, 0.9, and 0.8 respectively.

Table 30

Consider Work by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	0	7	9
Agree	5	18	18
Disagree	41	39	59
Strongly Disagree	54	36	14

In Table 31, the data indicates that a higher percentage of females (28 or 52%) agree that they considered Junior College than males (26 or 43% agree). The data also indicates 5 or 9% of females strongly disagreed compared to 3 or 5% of males that they considered Junior College causing the average to be similar near neutral for males (2.5) and females (2.4). Standard deviation for males and total was 0.7 and 0.8 for females.

Table 31

Consider Junior College by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	7	7	7
Agree	43	52	47
Disagree	46	31	39
Strongly Disagree	5	9	7

In Table 32 a higher percentage of students reporting B (7 or 13%) grades than C (1 or 5%) or A (0 or 0%) students reported strongly agree to consider Junior College as a first

career step. About half of A (19 or 51%) students, 26 or 46% of B, and 9 or 41% of C students agreed that they considered Junior College. The average for B (2.3) students is minimally above neutral while A (2.6) and C (2.6) students average response is slightly below neutral. Standard deviation for A and B students was 0.7 and 0.8 for C students.

Table 32

Consider Junior College by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	0	13	5
Agree	51	46	41
Disagree	38	39	41
Strongly Disagree	11	2	14

The data in Table 33 indicates that about three times as many males (14 or 23%) as females (4 or 7%) strongly agreed that they considered Religious College, however, a higher percentage of females (30 or 56%) than males (20 or 33%) selected agree. There was a wide range of responses with an average response of neutral (2.4) for both genders and the total. Standard deviation was 1.0, 0.8, and 0.9 for males, females and the total respectively.

Table 33

Consider Religious College by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	23	7	16
Agree	33	56	43
Disagree	30	26	28
Strongly Disagree	15	11	13

The data in Table 34 indicates that a higher percentage of students reporting A (8 or 22%) grades than B (7 or 13%) or C (3 or 14%) grades reported strongly considering Religious College. The most frequently selected response by A (16 or 43%), B (26 or 46%), and C (8 or 36%) students was agree. The average trended from slightly above neutral for A (2.3), and B (2.4) to neutral for C (2.5) students. Standard deviation was 1.0, 0.8, and 1.0 for A, B, and C students respectively.

Table 34

Consider Religious College by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	22	13	14
Agree	43	46	36
Disagree	22	30	32
Strongly Disagree	14	11	18

In Table 35 the data indicates that a slightly higher percentage of females (Strongly agree – 23 or 43%, Agree – 25 or 46%) than males (Strongly agree – 24 or 39%, Agree – 24 or 39%) considered University. More than 80% of all students reported agree or strongly agree. Averages for males, females, and the total were 1.9, 1.7, and 1.8 respectively. Standard deviations for males, females, and the total were 0.9, 0.7, and 0.8 respectively.

Table 35

Consider University by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	39	43	41
Agree	39	46	43
Disagree	16	9	13
Strongly Disagree	5	2	3

The data in Table 36 indicates that a higher percentage of students reporting A (Strongly agree - 21 or 57%, Agree – 16 or 43%) grades all gave consideration to University. B (Strongly agree – 21 or 38%, Agree – 25 or 45%) students gave more consideration than C (Strongly agree – 5 or 23%, Agree – 8 or 36%) students to University. The averages for A, B, and C students were 1.4, 1.8, and 2.3 respectively. Standard deviations were 0.5, 0.8, and 0.9 for A, B, and C students respectively.

Table 36

Consider University by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	57	38	23
Agree	43	45	36
Disagree	0	14	32
Strongly Disagree	0	4	9

The data in Table 37 indicates that a higher percentage of males (14 or 23%) than females (6 or 11%) strongly agree, similar percentage agrees (male – 24 or 39%, female – 22 or 41%) and a higher percentage of females (23 or 43%) than males (21 or 34%) disagree that they considered Technical College. The averages for males, females, and the total were 2.2, 2.4, and 2.3 respectively. Standard deviation was 0.8 for both genders and the total.

Table 37

Consider Technical College by Gender

	Male Percent	Female Percent	Total Percent
Strongly Agree	23	11	17
Agree	39	41	40
Disagree	34	43	38
Strongly Disagree	3	6	4

A higher percentage of students on average reporting C (2.0 agree) grades than B (2.2 - slightly below agree) or A (2.6 - neutral) grades considered Technical College. The data in

Table 38 indicates that a large majority of C (Strongly agree – 4 or 18%, Agree 14 or 64%) students, a slight majority of B (Strongly agree – 13 or 23%, Agree – 21 or 38%) students and a minority of A (Strongly agree – 3 or 8%, Agree – 11 or 30%) students selected strongly agree or agree to consider Technical College. Standard deviation was 0.8 for A and B, and 0.7 for C students.

Table 38

Consider Technical College by Self-Reported Grades

	A-Level Students Percent	B-Level Students Percent	C-Level Students Percent
Strongly Agree	8	23	18
Agree	30	38	64
Disagree	54	38	14
Strongly Disagree	8	2	5

Summary

The respondents indicated that all options except immediate work offered fulfilling careers, but that university was the only one with a strong positive. Respondents agreed, but not strongly, that they understood the career options offered by each option. The overwhelming majority considered university with students reporting higher grades giving stronger consideration. Students' consideration varied more by grades in general than gender. The junior college option averaged neutral, halfway between consider and not consider. Religious and technical college options on average were considered but barely. Most respondents did not consider work or the military.

Chapter 5

Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter contains three sections a summary of the study, conclusions from the study, and recommendations for further work. The summary restates the problem, methods used, and major findings. The conclusion states what can be said about the group studied with respect to the study. Recommendations include suggestions to improve similar studies and areas for additional research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine Fox Valley Lutheran High School senior students' perception of several post secondary alternatives.

Senior students' perception of several post secondary alternatives was collected through a survey conducted in the fall of 2002 at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton Wisconsin. Fox Valley Lutheran High School is a private, parochial school operated in association with churches affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The survey results indicate how viable these students think each alternative is, how well they understand each of the career options, and which option they would select on the day of the survey. The choices in the survey were; immediate work, military, junior college (2-year), technical college, religious college, or university (4-year colleges). The survey was written by the researcher for this study and conducted by instructors in religion classes required for all seniors. Nearly 90 percent of males and 70 percent females provided useable responses with similar responses for the career questions.

Conclusions

There were 5 research questions addressed by this study. Each question is restated and conclusions made for each.

1. Are there differences in participant attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about alternatives available after high school based on demographic characteristics? Yes. Similar percentages of male and female students chose some type of advanced education, however, a higher percentage of females chose University than males. Religious College, Junior College, and Technical College were selected by a higher percentage of males than females. Few males or females selected Work or Military as the initial career step (Table 1).

   Opinions of fulfilling career options offered by gender are displayed in Tables 3 (Military), 5 (Work), 7 (Junior College), 9 (Religious College), 11 (University), and 13 (Technical College). Both males and females had very similar responses for Work (disagreeing that there were many fulfilling career options) and Technical College (agree). Males had a very slightly higher opinion of the Military (agree) and University (strong agree) career options. Females had a very slightly higher opinion of the career options of Junior and Religious College (both agree).

   Understanding career options by gender, both males and females agreed that they understood all career options (Tables - 15 Military, 17 Work, 19 Junior College, 21 Religious College, 23 University, 25 Technical College). Females reported very slightly higher level of understanding for Junior College than males.

   Considering career options, males gave more consideration than females to Work and the Military, however, on average neither of the choices was frequently considered. Females slightly more often considered Junior College but on average both genders

had a neutral response. Religious College had a neutral response on average from both genders. Technical College and to a greater extent University were considered on average, with males slightly more often than females considering Technical College and slightly more females than males considering University.

University was the highest percent selection for all reported grade levels and higher percentage for students reporting A, than B, and higher for B than C. Religious College was second most often selected for A students, while B and C students second most often selected Technical College. Religious College was third most often selected by B students and tied for third with work for C students. At all grade levels greater than 80% of participants selected some form of additional education immediately after high school (Table 2). Similar opinions (ranked for each career option) of fulfilling career options offered by grades are displayed in Tables 4 (Military C > A > B), 6 (Work B > C > A), 8 (Junior College A = B = C), 10 (Religious College A = B > C), 12 (University A > B > C), and 14 (Technical College B > A = C).

On average, students agreed they understood career options for each choice with a slight differences by grades ranked in Table 16 (Military B > C > A), 18 (Work A = B > C), 20 (Junior College B > A > C), 22 (Religious College A > B > C), 24 (University A > B > C), and 26 (Technical College B > A > C).

Students on average disagreed that they considered Military (Table 28) and Work (Table 30) with students with lower grades giving slightly more consideration (C > B > A) for both. Neutral on average, with about the same number disagreeing as agreeing, for Junior College (Table 32, B > A = C) and Religious College (Table 34, A > B > C). Technical College, on average, scored agree, with students reporting C grades agreeing slightly stronger than students reporting B grades, and students

reporting A grades having an average of neutral (Table 36, C > B > A). University on average had a slightly stronger than agree response, with students reporting A grades having a strong agree, students reporting B having agree, and students reporting C grades having a score just above neutral (Table 38, A > B > C).

2. If high school seniors had to choose today, what would they choose to do immediately after high school?

   The greatest number would attend a University. The vast majority would seek some type of advanced education. Few would seek immediate Work or the Military (Table 1).

3. Are high school seniors aware that each of the alternatives (Military, Work, Junior College, Religious College, University, and Technical College) provides many fulfilling career options?

   Students agree that Junior College (Table 7, 8), Religious College (Table 9, 10), and Technical College (Table 13, 14) provide many fulfilling career options. Students agree slightly more stongly that Universitys (Table 11, 12) provide many fulfilling career options. Students disagree that Military (Table 3, 4) and Work (Table 5, 6) provide many fulfilling career options.

4. Do high school seniors understand the career options offered by each of the alternatives, (Military, Junior College, Religious College, University, Work, Technical College)?

   Students agree that they understand the career options offersed by each of the alternatives (Military Table 15, 16: work Table 17, 18: Junior College Table 19, 20: Religious College Table 21, 22: University Table 23, 24: Technical College Table 25, 26).

5. Would high school seniors consider each of the alternatives, (Military, Junior College, Religious College, University, Work, Technical College) immediately after high school?

   Students on average disagreed when asked if they considered Military (Table 27, 28) and Work (Table 29, 30). Students on average neither agreed nor disagreed when asked if they considered Junior College (Table 31, 32) and Religious College (Table 33, 34). Students on average agreed when asked if they considered University (Table 35, 36) and Technical College (Table 37, 38).

Recommendations

The recommendations below are divided into two parts, those that can be drawn from the instrumentation and results related to this specific study and recommendations for further work outside of this study.

Recommendations Related to This Study

1. Several students selected more than one choice for grades. This question could be improved to accommodate respondents who feel it is necessary to record in-between letter grades.
2. The question asking the student to report grades (survey question 2) was a major reason for surveys to be excluded. The other significant item reducing response rate was parental consent. Correction of these problems would have made the excellent response rate even better. The researcher focus on avoiding personal information was very likely a positive factor in response rate as well as the cooperation of the staff, parents and students of Fox Valley Lutheran High School. Initial meetings describing the research and seeking input and approval of the survey instrument was crucial in building and maintaining that enthusiasm. Early and frequent consultation is highly recommended.

3. Respondents agreed that they understood the career options offered by each of the alternatives, however, none of the alternatives had better than 1/3 strongly agreeing (Tables 27-38). Opportunity for further education about career options could help respondents have a stronger understanding of the options offered by each alternative. This may increase the number of alternatives students consider.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Compare parochial or other private schools to public school student career selections. There is a lack of that type of study in the literature. The Australian study of private versus public school student perceptions was a rare exception (Lamb, 1994).
2. Evaluate opportunities to change perception of career options. An education program in various career options could be evaluated with a before and after study of student perceptions. Evaluation of guidance programs in the literature was often by expert opinion rather than objective measurement (Wichita Public Schools, 1990: Kucker, 2000: Mooney, 1987: Snyder & Spindel, 1997).
3. Study the depth of students career option understanding. The use of interviews or an objective questionnaire could determine the actual understanding of the career options versus perceived understanding. Studies on uncertainty approach this problem indirectly (Schmidt, 2001: Spangler, 2000: Fawcett and Maycock, 2001).
4. Aptitude of respondents could be compared to career selections. An interest inventory and career capability test might reveal likely success in the alternative selected. Years have passed since intellectual predisposition, (University of California, Berkeley, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, Tillery, & College Entrance Examination Board, 1966) or personality type Hood (1968) were included in a study attempting to measure success.

5. Financial or other expectations could be studied as a part of the respondents' perception of fulfilling careers. What percentage of high school students is motivated to select an initial career choice by high-expected pay? Studies involving second careers and associated job training find that prospects of employment and increased income are important factors (Reusch, 2000: Burnvedt, 1984).

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Appendix A

Parental Consent Form

To complete a Masters Degree in Technical and Adult Education from the University of Wisconsin – Stout a thesis reporting educational research is required. Research involving people requires the use of protocols to protect the rights of the people studied. It is the researcher's responsibility to seek the approval of all subjects and parents or guardians of all underage subjects.

If you decide not to allow your high school senior to participate please return the form anyway stating your disapproval. Unreturned forms will be followed up.

To thank you for your help each completed and returned consent form will be entered in a drawing for a gift.

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without prejudice. I understand that the purpose of this study is to investigate Fox Valley Lutheran High School seniors' perception of post high school career alternatives. I further understand that any information about me collected during this study will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be part of my permanent record. I understand that at the conclusion of this study all records which identify individual participants will be destroyed.

Signature of Client: _____ date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____date: _____

Note: Questions or concerns about the study should be addressed to Greg Koshak (920-836-9528), the researcher, or Julianne Taylor (715-232-1443), the research advisor. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone (715) 232-1126.

Appendix B

The following survey questions ask facts about you. Please read each question carefully and circle the best answer.

1. I am …

   Male Female

2. My report card indicates that I am a/an _____ student.

   A B C D F

3. If I had to choose today, I would choose the following option after high school.

   Religious College Work Military Junior College

   University Technical College Other (Specify) _____

The following questions ask your attitude, opinion, or perception. Read each question carefully and circle the best answer. (SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

1. Joining the military immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – Army or Coast Guard)

   SA A D SD

2. Going to work immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – Local stores, restaurants, or other employers not requiring advanced training after high school)

   SA A D SD

3. Attending junior (2 year) college immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – University of Wisconsin Center – Fox Valley)

   SA A D SD

4. Attending a religious college immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – Wisconsin Lutheran College)

   SA A D SD

5. Attending a university (4 year College) immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh)

   SA A D SD

6. Attending a technical college immediately after high school provides many fulfilling career options. (Example – Fox Valley Technical College)

   SA A D SD

7. I understand the career options offered by the military.

   SA A D SD

8. I understand the career options offered by junior colleges.

   SA A D SD

9. I understand the career options offered by religious colleges.

   SA A D SD

10. I understand the career options offered by universities.

    SA A D SD

11. I understand the career options offered by work.

    SA A D SD

12. I understand the career options offered by technical colleges.

    SA A D SD

13. I would consider joining the military immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD

14. I would consider going to work full-time immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD

15. I would consider going to a junior college immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD

16. I would consider going to a religious college immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD

17. I would consider going to a university immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD

18. I would consider going to a technical college immediately after high school.

    SA A D SD